

Ranking Member Kay Granger Opening statement

(As prepared for delivery)

State, foreign operations and related programs appropriations bill FY 2010 full committee markup June 23, 2009

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'd like to begin by thanking chairman Lowey. It has been a pleasure working with you on this important bill. You've been open and responsive to the issues and concerns raised by members on this side of the aisle, and I thank you for your commitment to bipartisanship and regular order.

I'd also like to thank the staff on both sides who have worked together to craft the bill. I'd like to thank the majority staff: Nisha Desai-Biswal, Craig Higgins, Steve Marchese, Michele Sumilas, Vlelia Alvarado, and Courtenay Dunn. On the minority staff: Anne Marie Chotvacs, Mike Ringler, Alice Hogans, and Jason small. I know Mrs. Lowey and I appreciate our personal office staff who also worked on the bill: Ann Vaughan and Rachel Carter. We all benefit from these highly professional staffers and they, too, have worked together to bring forth this bill.

As my colleagues on the subcommittee know, chairman Lowey and i have operated in a bipartisan way in crafting this bill, but I am concerned that the events that unfolded on the house floor last week indicate that the collegial manner in which the committee is accustomed to operating could be an idea of the past.

I urge my colleagues to support a return to a process where every member has an opportunity to have their voice heard. Without this opportunity, many members will be less certain of the bill, less certain of the utility and oversight of U.S. foreign aid, less certain of our contributions to multilateral organizations, and less inclined to support the bill.

I hope this bill can move forward in regular order today and during floor consideration.

Now let me turn to the bill before the committee today. Everyone who serves on this committee is aware of the many global challenges we face and the importance of the decisions we make here in this room. The funds being voted on today provide security assistance to our allies and funds for countries living in very dangerous neighborhoods. But there is also another reality for this bill -- the financial crisis we and the countries we are supporting are living through. So I would like to address the cost of this bill up front, given our challenges at home.

The allocation given to this subcommittee is \$48.8 billion - an amount that when strictly compared to the '09 base bill is very high.

However, the administration has pledged to eliminate war supplemental spending in favor of the regular appropriations process. And this includes spending for state and USAID operations and programs. This is a goal I support. Thus, if the administration holds true to its promise -- though I have to admit many members remain skeptical -- then it is fair to compare the '09 base bill, plus the supplemental bill adjusted for items forward funded for fy10, to this year's allocation.

One of the most important things to remember are the efforts begun by the previous administration (and supported by defense secretary gates in this administration) to increase staffing at USAID and the state department.

The 300 new development officers and the more than 1000 new diplomatic staff will help balance the 3d's of a "smart power" approach to national security.

The increase for development and diplomacy will in turn support our nation's defense and allow our military men and women to re-focus on their core mission.

However, as we increase diplomatic and development staff, it is important that hiring is done wisely and coupled with a continual process of reform.

The administration should prove they have a well-thought out plan to absorb these new staff and deploy them effectively.

An expert panel we heard from earlier this year suggested that new resources were only part of re-balancing a “smart power” approach to development and diplomacy.

They also called for our foreign affairs agencies to upgrade their business practices, move from a culture of risk avoidance to risk management and increase training opportunities.

In order to achieve success, the level of commitment to reform must be equal to the commitment of the funding this committee will provide. it is in that context that the committee will fulfill its obligation to oversee these funds.

We have many questions, and we will continue to ask them as these funds are spent. Do new recruits have the right skills to be successful? Are state and USAID providing them with the appropriate training? Are staff being deployed into places where they are most needed, and are they able to work in a safe and secure environment?

Chairman Lowey has listened to my concerns and we have worked together to craft language to strengthen the oversight of hiring, training, and deploying these new staff.

I have also called for a comprehensive review of the roughly \$8 billion of global health funding provided in this bill, as well as other international health funds across government.

This is critical in order to determine what strategies and solutions work best. I thank chairman Lowey for supporting this review of health programs.

Chairman Lowey has already described the highlights, so i will simply reiterate 3 very important items that I believe demonstrate our shared commitment on matter of foreign policy and national security:

- \$1.4 billion is included to expand the work of the millennium challenge corporation, a \$525 million increase, to support the prosperity and security of some of our key partners in the developing world;
- this bill fully funds the security assistance requests for strategic allies like Israel, Egypt and Jordan;
- This bill continues to fight illegal drug trafficking in this hemisphere by fully funding the pending request for Mexico and Central America and by providing \$7 million above the request to continue the gains made in Colombia.

Let me say a few words about the family planning programs in this bill. The committee bill funds voluntary family planning programs at a significantly higher level than last year. This is a concern i have expressed. Mrs. Lowey has agreed to include language, closely mirroring the fy08 bill, which prevents us tax dollars from going to organizations that support or participate in involuntary or coercive methods of family planning. There are legitimate concerns about family planning funding that goes abroad. Mrs. Lowey deserves credit for addressing many of the concerns my members have expressed. It's my hope that we can work through whatever issues that may arise so that we're able to have bipartisan support for this bill. In summary, this bill is focused on furthering foreign policy and national security interests, monitoring the use of our tax dollars, and achieving balanced solutions to complex policy problems.

There will inevitably be improvements that my colleagues and i may want to make as we move this bill through the full committee today and when we consider the bill on the house floor.

I would again like to express my appreciation to Chairman Lowey for her willingness to work together and for her commitment to regular order.

I look forward to moving this bill forward to the house floor.